



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

the only separate edition<sup>8</sup> which presents a complete, correct text, with the various readings of the original editions. Taken altogether, it is an extremely satisfactory piece of work, and places the editor among the number of Keats' most competent and sympathetic critics.

The printer's errors are few, the type is large and clear, and the price (M. 1. 60) brings it within the reach of all.

WILLIAM A. READ.

University of Arkansas.

### PROVENÇAL LITERATURE.

*The Troubadours at Home: Their Lives and Personalities, their Songs and their World*, by JUSTIN H. SMITH. Edited by G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York: 1899. 2 vols.

THESE books are well printed in clear distinct type, on paper of good quality—two characteristics which recommend the volumes at once to the indulgence and affection of the reader. The intention of the author in writing is plainly expressed in the preface where he declares it to be his desire to place this literature before us somewhat as it originally appeared, and to represent the world of the troubadours, to place them in it as living persons, and to put into their mouths their poems as they made them—only in another language. Mr. Smith has spent some time in the South of France in order to make himself familiar with the haunts of this bygone age, fortifying his memory and later his book, with copious photographs. Besides this he has given abundant illustration of the mental topography of the troubadours by translating the original Provençal into English verse. The prime object of the whole work is to offer this body of poets to us endowed with a presentness, an actuality that shall be strong enough and fresh enough to overcome the musty smell that hovers over such collections as Raynouard's *Choix des Poésies des Troubadours*, and the various Chrestomathies.

<sup>8</sup> The best complete edition of Keats' works is that of Forman: *The Poetical Works and other Writings of John Keats*. Edited, with notes and appendices, by H. Buxton Forman. In four volumes. London, Reeves & Turner, 1883. 8vo. Reissue, with additions and corrections, 1889.

The working scheme on which the book is constructed is a journey through the South of France, a plan which perhaps aids the author in his ambition to reach reality, as the birth-places of the various poets are described at length, as well as the cities famous in the lives and loves of these gallants.

In his preface, the author notes that his style has been most carefully adapted to the subject-matter which he treats, in order to assure an organic whole, and his zeal and enthusiasm for his protégés betray him at times into little extravagancies that I fear do not always produce the impression desired. He speaks of the Marquis riding into the market followed by a goodly plump of spears, which is rather a step backward, although it gives a certain touch to the narrative that is not anticipated and so arouses us to expectation. Speaking of Rambaut d'Aurenga, he places us on the most intimate of footings with him, and we feel that we have known the gentleman all our lives, when Mr. Smith informs us: "In short he was free to live a jolly old dog, and a jolly old dog lived he." This is one of the charms of the book. We realize that Mr. Smith is most chummy with his models, and that we reap the benefit without extra charge so we exclaim with him "The jolly old dog: well, well, it does one good to know him." And this, too, in spite of his appearing from Aurenga instead of Orange, and although the familiar Alfonso becomes Amfas, and Henry seems strange at first as Enric.

Mr. Smith's imagination is most inspiring, and his sense of personality is very keen, as seen from the following:

"It is the Lady Biatritz. Slender and petite, she added much of the light grace of a girl to the fuller beauty of a woman. Her face had no color save a slight olive tint, and her features were delicate, though drawn with firm lines. While almost all about her were of fair complexion, she like her mother, was very dark, with eyes as black as the thick wavy hair that shadowed her rather small forehead. Her voice had the color of Alban wine, with overtones like the gleams of light in the still velvety depths of the goblet, and when she smiled, it seemed as if she drew from a harp a slow deep chord in the mode of Aeolia."

The author says she was dark like her mother, but in reality she was just what her father made

her, and he was none of your Aimars, or Amfases, but just plain Smith, Professor of Modern History at Dartmouth College, and she should have been named Minerva for she leaped from his brain full-grown. Here is one of her brethren. His given name is Raimbaut d'Aurenga.

"His full round throat delivers the words fondly, as he would release a lady's hand. His well-filled body gives a sounding resonance to every tone. The bright pink of his plump cheeks deepens to an actual red, glowing warmly down into a soft brown beard. The hair, thick and short and set with rotary cowlicks all over his big head, seems waltzing electrically. And when each stanza is concluded he reinforces the interlude with amorous looks or jocund laugh, his bright eyes roving from side to side meanwhile to gather in the largess of smiles and applause."

The only information we have of the lady's appearance is taken from Raimbaut's songs, and he is as vague as a modern impressionist painting. We are informed solely that she is very beautiful and adorned with all manner of conventional graces. Of her lover, we learn in a delightfully suggestive manner that "at about fifty-five, he married a 'fair and noble lady'" and "devoted himself to gathering olive branches," at which congenial occupation we will leave him.

Another interesting feature of the book is the bits of information that we are constantly gleaning, which in each case causes a thrill of gratification. We learn that the Countess of Berlatz rode down to the city by the Orb, and became the mistress of castle and court two years before Raimbaut of Orange was gathered to his fathers, and three before the leaning tower of Pisa was begun. Speaking of Lombers he says: "The site is there still, but the castle has utterly vanished. When Plymouth colony was two years old (1622) the flames made an end of it, etc." Another homely illustration which helps to make Mr. Smith's style what it is can be found where the Tarn is mentioned near Albi.

"Three bridges cross the stream. In spite of the grand impressiveness of the scene I could not help thinking of the three bears in the story: and I called them the big bridge, the little bridge, and the middle-sized bridge."

At all times this manner may be said to catch the attention, and frequently lends a picturesque element that is not to be despised. Describing a castle near Bordeaux he says:

"A few miles from the town and the river lies an extensive estate called Benauges, and we journeyed into it by a coiled road like a spiral spring. When we began to be wound up closely toward the end of our drive, it seemed as if the spring must snap, but it did not for a large, but half-ruined castle, held the end of it fast."

Of course the metaphor would be harder to trace than the spiral spring road which did not snap because the end was fast to a castle, yet as color it is appreciable. The author describes the poetry of Bertran de Born.

"Born is not easy and serenely artistic, but impatient, forced, sometimes incorrect and frequently rough: his usual style is not sweet and unctuous, but rather dry and severe; and instead of flowing musically on, caressing flowery banks with lyric eddies and echoing the boughs of the forest and the blue of the heavens with lights and shadows even more profound and more significant, his verse rushes on like a torrent; always restless, often violent: grey, swift, fierce, tearing at its banks, boiling up the mud and gravel of its bed, and rolling great stones along its channel with many hoarse rumblings and many a hard shock."

We may be doubtful about the caress of an eddy, or about a stream echoing boughs and the blue sky, but have to admit the pictorial effect. Listen also to this.

"Why do the salmon hurry up the rivers? Because each individual salmon feels a new craving that nothing else will satisfy. Why did the chivalry of Europe rush to the sandy shores of Palestine? Was it because Urban preached and Peter the Hermit wept? No: but because a new spirit, a new life had sprung up in millions of individuals, and it found satisfaction in the idea of the crusade. . . . A full tide of energy surged up tumultuously into the faculties of emotion, and of thought everybody had a 'freshet in his head and felt so rich in life,' etc."

Which is certainly suggestive. Here is a picture: The author is speaking of Rocamadour.

"A valley without mountains a vast gash in the earth. Up from the bottom grows a precipice, out of the precipice one narrow street

full of houses, out of the houses a cliff, out of the cliff a cloud of chapels and sanctuaries, out of these a dizzy overhanging crag, and out of the crag, the walls and battlements and towers of a castle."

His description of the destruction of Beziers is also vivid, opening with *Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace good will to men*, and closing with *Glory to the devil and the pope*. At times we gather a pleasantly facetious bit as, speaking of Courthézon,

"Within the walls it is another of those old cities laid out with no thought of system, unless to make it as perplexing as possible to an enemy. Tourists fall under this head apparently; but there is the perpetual charm of unexpectedness in such a place, and this—to a Bostonian—is at least homelike. Happily the pavement has been rooted out, and a cousin of Mr. McAdam put in its place—a great advantage where one has to try four streets to find one."

The idea which Mr. Smith gives of the age is most convincing, yet, occasionally, I am led to question if perhaps he has not been overpersuaded by his enthusiasm for these representatives of a past century to retouch them so vividly as to mislead somewhat unless his method is explained. At the outset we find the statement that "troubadour poetry has no descendants but that all our modern literature may look to it as a parent." This he modifies by saying that their literature was the first which took form: it modified every other, and it was long entirely independent. We wonder curiously, what has become of the French Epic and the Chanson de Geste and the Miracle Play. Speaking of the troubadour influence on English, our author says in his picturesque way, "Chaucer's well drew from the Arno and the Arno rose in Provence," yet Chaucer's obligation to the troubadours is so faint as to be barely discernible. To Italy—yes both for matter and suggestion, as well as to North France, but Provence can claim little if any influence on English song, though the author of these volumes claims much; in fact I am tempted to believe that frequently the charm of an expression carries the pen beyond the intended limit. We find for instance: French was for centuries the upper-class language of England, and it was a French leavened with

troubadour poetry. He says, also, that "from their poetry Europe received a general indoctrination, and the sentiments and ideas of chivalric love became a part of modern life," a statement that leads us to infer that the age of chivalry was a direct outgrowth of the troubadour poetry, which is a novel idea.

Mr. Smith mentions the conventional reference to spring which is one of the characteristic features of this poetry, yet a little later we find the following:

"In the garden above Agen, in the very home of the troubadours, with the same breeze on our cheeks that they felt, looking at the hedges of hawthorn as they saw them and listening as they listened to the melodies of the rossignol, we come to understand their songs: we know why the lyric was enough to content them, we know why they loved variety of form rather than solidity of thought: we feel that their poetry was evanescent only as the flowers are, and we realize how love and spring, the garden, the rose, and the nightingale, were to them themes ever fresh and ever delightful."

And yet we are told that these were conventional. He declares that Provençal poetry is called monotonous, and states that this is due to a lack of knowledge. The next page we notice an admission that there is much to excuse this criticism, and the next page we find that if we collect the pieces and study them all together we observe a sameness.

In fact there seem to be two spirits running through these volumes: one a spirit of renaissance for the troubadours, an insistency to recreate them as humans at any cost, even if it be necessary to add a few touches of the purest, brightest colored romance; and the other a spirit of conservatism, the result of study and tradition that is quite opposed to the former. The writer has decided to his satisfaction that the troubadours were anything but artificial, and that their work was the spontaneous outburst of a fresh and loving spirit.

"However ingenious the pattern, all the chief poets were agreed that no technical skill was of any value unless it had feeling behind it: and we may fairly look upon the intricacies of the best Provençal verse as not in any way akin to the spiritless artificiality of acrostics and the like, but as the natural embroidery of brands and leaf instinct with life and the vernal spirit, forced sometimes, but never falsified by hothouse conditions."

Yet if this is so, it will be a unique instance in which extreme artificiality of form was a covering for aught but stereotyped thought and iteration, as in the carefully studied lyrics preceding the Renaissance. However, on the following page the author declares

"the verse of the troubadours was indeed too artistic, for everything has the defects of its qualities, and its ardent devotion to form carried it on to artificiality and lifeless elaboration."

So we are agreed again.

We have a description of the lady of Arnaut of Marueilh which to my mind sounds strangely familiar.

"The fair blonde locks, the forehead whiter than lilies, the vair laughing eyes, changing color with her mood, the straight firm nose, the fresh face outvying the white and vermillion of flowers, the small mouth and white teeth, the chin and throat like snow or the wild rose, the fair white hands and the fingers both smooth and slender. By more spiritual traits, as well, we recognize the woman whose praise is the entire body of Arnaut's poetry."

This category is mentioned as the specific property of the lady Alazais, and yet does not every heroine described by the poets of old rise before us in quite the same envelope? It is, however, one of the pleasant features of this book that the personal element is so accentuated that we see the company plainly through Mr. Smith's glasses. Every character is made to take shape, willy nilly. The author speaks, moreover, most persuasively for the Platonic friendship as the most probable basis of the relation existing between lady and poet-lover, and yet incident after incident rises in the development of the lives before us which suggests a warmer throb at the bottom of the puzzle than that advocated by the calm conclusions of the Greek philosopher. We read moreover:

"Just then and just there loving another man's wife was in truth a means of grace and a hope of glory; it saved women from despair and ruin; and as men prize what they see prized by others, it had a tendency, besides its other good effects, to make them appreciate and love their own wives."—

Which is certainly a magnanimous thought but,

it seems to me, a little overdrawn for the days of the Rimini, Eleanor of Poitou and Sordello, who is characterized as, a bold unprincipled licentious, and unflinchingly practical adventurer, a description applicable to most of the knights of the period. Born is declared to be an unprincipled schemer, selling his talents for a price and ready to embark in any cause, no matter what the general results might be if it would fill his coffer.

They are all tagged: we have Raimbaut de Vaqueiras the knight, Arnaut de Marueilh the sentimental, and Sain Circ the Society man. Sordello the Adventurer, Vidal the Eccentric, Peire Ramon the Graceful, Miraval the Spark, Sain Leidier the Gentleman, Folquet the Fantastic, Faidit the Fleshly, etc., etc.

The author at times becomes almost epigrammatic, in such sentences as: "Provençal poetry as a life culminated in B. de Ventadorn, as a science in Arnaut Daniel, and as an art in Guiraut de Borneil:" or speaking of Raimbaut de Vaqueiras the author says;

"As a man he commands our admiration—sagacious, true, and brave, as a troubadour he embodied perfectly the ideas and feelings of the elite of his age, equally approved by men and women. Lord-service, lady-service, and God-service were the three great offices of the troubadour, and he was pre-eminent in each. Above all his mind, character and life were a symmetrical whole—his thoughts became deeds, his acts were poems."

To my mind the feature of the work are the illustrations furnished by the poetry of the troubadours translated, or rather reworked in, English verse preserving in every instance the original rhythm and rhyme-scheme as completely as possible. The entire poem chosen for presentation is seldom given, but enough is printed to convey an excellent idea of the general literary effect. In almost all cases the reworking in English is admirably done. Occasionally an awkward inversion or similar roughness is to be found, but this is inevitable in a language as analytic as English.

As adjuncts to the general story of the troubadours, the author gives a glance at the origins of lyric poetry, and a notion of the musical theory at the time.

Both volumes are provided with maps, and

a very full bibliography is added to the edition, as well as copious notes. The plan on which the book is constructed gives undoubtedly the impression of lack of unity, and this is exaggerated by the broadness of treatment of fact, which aims solely at pictorial effect, but the result is in a way a part of Mr. Smith's intention in writing, I should surmise. He has endeavored to furnish a succession of word-paintings, which pass before us with a vividness that is at times dramatic. If it is admitted at the outset that Mr. Smith has the correct perception of the period he is treating, the book can give only pleasure, and in any case would prove entertaining reading.

PHILLIP OGDEN.

*Johns Hopkins University.*

---

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

---

#### LECTURES AT GRENOBLE.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—As so many American students and teachers are planning to spend their vacation this year in France, your readers will perhaps be glad to have a brief account of the courses in French given during the summer at the University of Grenoble. I was one of the four or five Americans who attended these courses last year, out of more than a hundred persons from many different countries: and I am happy to testify to the exceptional advantages there offered for study and recreation,—advantages which, if better known, would tempt many persons who wish to spend their time profitably and their money economically after satisfying their curiosity at Paris. Grenoble, at the confluence of the Isère and the Drac, is the most beautifully situated city in France, surrounded by superb mountains, and a convenient centre for magnificent excursions of all kinds. The city is not rich in antiquities, but has a few of real interest, such as a church dating from the sixth century, and a Palais de Justice of the early Renaissance; while the museum is one of the best in France. The large municipal library contains many treasures; two of the

manuscripts are of especial interest,—Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia* and the poems of Charles d'Orléans.

The "Cours de Vacances," lasting from July 1 to October 31, are given in the handsome modern Palais de l'Université by Professors from the Faculties of Letters, Law, and Medicine, and from the Lycée, and also by other prominent citizens of Grenoble. They include lectures on various topics, usually connected with literature, or with the history, institutions, and geography of the Dauphiné; and *cours pratiques*, which are exercises in reading, writing and speaking. Among the lecturers for the coming summer, I notice M. Brun, who will speak on a subject on which he is now the leading authority, Savinien de Cyrano-Bergerac. Students of French history will be interested in *Les débuts de la Révolution*, a lecture followed by a visit to the château of Vizille. A timely topic is *L'Impérialisme Anglo-Américain et le droit international*, by a Law Professor. Weekly lectures on the history of art are given by M. Marcel Reymond, well-known for his books on Italian sculpture, who is the president of the *Comité de Patronage des Étudiants Étrangers*, and the personal friend of every student. One of the pleasantest episodes last year was a breakfast at M. Reymond's country-house, followed by a delightful tramp over the hills. Mondays are given up to excursions of this nature, and one of the greatest advantages of Grenoble is the opportunity of meeting many interesting and charming residents. I remember with particular pleasure my instruction in the *jeu de boules*, a kind of bowling played by everybody in Grenoble on a broad esplanade outside the city. Experiences of this kind are as important as language-lessons to one who wishes to know France; and in some respects a provincial city like Grenoble is preferable to Paris, especially in the summer. Moreover, living is reasonable in price, and excellent; the fees for the courses are small. The weather was a little warm last August, and delightful in September.

In order to profit by these courses, one should be able to understand spoken French; ability to speak is of less importance at the beginning. Men and women are admitted on equal terms.